

Jurying and Artistic Expression

Charged with jurying the hubcaps, the four of us roamed through an unending maze of rooms above Ken Marquis's store in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, in order to get a handle on the scope of the work. Each of us had two immediate and visceral reactions: the astounding density of the objects and the wide array of inventiveness the artists brought to the project. During the day, a third reaction pounded our temples: the amazing dedication, excitement, and commitment Ken Marquis has to *Landfillart* and *Second Time Around: The Hubcap as Art*.

Second Time Around is a selection of used automobile hubcaps with which hundreds of people plied their technical skills and creative "juices" to reinvent that old, discarded car part. Ken Marquis, the founder of Landfillart and a reputed car devotee, may have chosen that particular part of the car because of its cosmetic or aesthetic contribution to the automobile. Certainly the hubcap is portable and, through the right eyes, its size, shape, and surface make for a perfect canvas. Regardless, the hubcap is an identifiable component of the automobile, rich with symbolism, culture, consumerism, and an unprecedented impact on American life. With recycling as the theme of the exhibition, this effort leads to other serious issues such as reducing our consumption of manufactured goods and personal use and responsibility.

The hundreds of artists involved with the project and this exhibition approached the hubcap in various ways. Many treated the hubcap as a stretched canvas and applied painting and drawing mediums to create images that were abstract or realistic. Many of the hubcaps were an apparent extension of the artist's own style, technique, and medium. Other artists may have felt more carefree or liberated by the hubcap object, and detoured from their usual approach and materials into new areas. There are artists who chose to present their statement in three dimensions, and altered the hubcap by cutting into it, or attaching other forms to it.

The diversity of work in this show is refreshing and contributes to the impact of the visual statements. Many images reference the suffering environment; other images pay homage to the automobile or all that is related to it, such as traveling, speed, the open road, or a favorite

make of car. Some works are conceptual, depicted from the perspective of the tire with the hubcap mirroring an aspect of its journey, terrain, or adventure. A number of images are totally decorative and personal. Some works have a note of whimsy or naiveté about them, reminding one of folk art or Outsider art in their use of a vernacular object.

An interesting aspect of the project is the starting point: the hubcap. Everyone had the same extreme restriction: to make a creative statement using a hubcap. This is often an approach used in the academic studio and classroom, whereby students are limited with materials in order to explore their personal style. Artists from different disciplines, e.g., architecture, industrial design, jewelry and metalsmithing, ceramic design, graphic design, woodworking, always work within certain confines, and yet are able to be extremely creative.

The 287 multi-national artists who started with one used hubcap proved that something good could come from one of our many discards. We are sure that the exhibition will attest that the visual arts can make an important social comment and, at the same time, entertain viewers with creative and lively images.

*The Museum of the Shenandoah Valley extends its gratitude to Marywood University, Scranton, Pennsylvania, and its art-department staff for serving as jurors of **Second Time Around: The Hubcap as Art**: Steven Alexander, Coordinator of Undergraduate Painting and Art Study Abroad; Robert Griffith, Coordinator of Sculpture and Three-Dimensional Design and now Department Chairman; Matt Povse, Department Chairman at the time of selection and Coordinator of the Ceramics Area; and Sandra Ward Povse, Director of Marywood University Art Galleries.*